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Jean-Pierre Montier

Translator: Franck Le Gac

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Henri Cartier-Bresson, ‘Public Intellectual’?

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1 Henri Cartier-Bresson’s photographs taken on a trip to the USSR in 1954 appeared in two issues of *Paris Match* (nos. 305 and 306), and in the book *Moscou vu par Henri Cartier-Bresson* published by Robert Delpire.[1] I will explore all three publications, with two ideas in mind.

2 The first is that the golden age of photojournalism may be said to coincide with an exchange of identities between the politically engaged intellectual and the photographer. When measured against the stereotypes that prevailed before 1970, it may seem strange to associate the man of letters who lives in his mind with the photographer presumed incapable of writing or expressing himself other than by way of images. But part of Cartier-Bresson’s genius may well reside in his having united the professional image-maker with the thinker. In a geopolitically divided world, the photojournalist came close to the intellectual as defined by Sartre: ‘Since the writer has no way of escaping, we want him to embrace his era – tightly.’[2] The essence of the work became conflated with the commitment of its author. The surrealists enlisted themselves ‘at the service of the Revolution’; the new rationale had to do with producing both a record and a judgement.[3] Committed intellectuals were neither prophets nor experts, but were able to take note of facts and put them in historical perspective: they were empirical visionaries.

3 The second idea is that the framework for photographic reportage, as a consequence of its institutional acceptance, was derived from literary genres. These genres provided the structural and ideological model for photojournalism. The writer’s travelogue – with its constraints, struggle for influence, and pursuit of public approval – was to rub off on that of the photographer. The photographer could also, rather ingenuously, claim the objectivity of his point of view.

In the Land of the Soviets: The Generic Matrix

4 The trip to the Soviet Union had become a literary genre in its own right, with its failures and masterpieces, and its burden of literary norms and constraints. One of the first attempts in this genre was the work of motorcyclist and photographer Robert Sexé, who, in 1925, did a Paris–Moscow trek, the 'Circuit des Soviets.'[4] In *Au pays des Soviets* [In the Land of the Soviets], Fred Kupferman lists more than one hundred and thirty writers' travelogues from between 1917 and 1939.[5] For some, the journey was a pilgrimage; for others an expedition to hell. Most sought to confirm their convictions; a few were in search of truth, which was more easily discerned than reported – for who wanted to hear about it? This accumulation of works contributed to the formation of rules for a genre that, while never defined as such, nevertheless existed.

5 The most famous of these trips was that made by André Gide. In the wake of the Victor Serge affair, the writer wanted to know if he had chosen the right side. Warm welcomes and speeches applauded by crowds summoned for the occasion succeeded one after another from June to August 1936, as he made his way around the country. Despite pressure from some of his friends, Gide went ahead and published his *Return from the USSR* , making public his dismay: 'And I doubt whether in any other country in the world, even Hitler's Germany, thought [would] be less free, more bowed down, more fearful (terrorized), more vassalized.'[6] In this, Gide was to anticipate Hannah Arendt, but at the time he was savaged by Romain Rolland, Louis Aragon, and Charles Vildrac. When it came to impugning his reliability as a witness, nothing was off limits, including allusions to his sexual preferences: how dependable, it was said, could the opinion of a homosexual possibly be?[7]

6 Henri Cartier-Bresson did not run into the same problem. Still, he had to conform to the same ritualistic '[trip] to the country of the bright future.'[8] 'Had to' since no reportage worthy of the name seemed possible in a place whose economy and society were an illusion. The dilemma had already been spelled out by writers who had made the trip over the previous three decades. Their accounts formed a patchwork of token fact-checking and illusory projections, but still strove to produce both a record and a judgment, along the same lines as those laid down by Sartre after the Second World War.

7 By then, ideological conditions were no longer what they had been before 1939. The enforcement of communism had become the subject of debates and the Sartrean 'fellow traveler' was a more distant figure, a circumspect sympathizer. Communism now had its agnostics: the existentialists. However, the mutually supportive departments of tourism and propaganda had no reason to change a formula that had proved so successful with many writers, some of whom lacked Gide's scruples and were reluctant to pay the price of repentance.

8 Sartre rejected capitalism and Stalinism, yet he admitted that, should he have to choose between the United States and the USSR, he would unhesitatingly opt for the latter – a position criticized by Raymond Aron, who left the editorial board of *Les Temps modernes*. In 1947 Merleau-Ponty published *Humanisme et terreur*,[9] which set forth the idea that, while communism could resort to a provisional terror if need be, in the name of a genuine improvement in the condition of peoples, this terror was unacceptable as a system of government. In 1951, a trial pitted *Les Lettres françaises* against David Rousset, the author of *Les Jours de notre mort* [The Days of Our Death],[10] who had dared draw parallels between

Nazi and Soviet camps, and had used the word 'gulag.'[11] Finally, Albert Camus' *L'Homme révolté*[12] was the first work to challenge, on a fundamental level, the mystique of the revolution upon which the French intelligentsia still thrived. This resulted in the break between its author and Sartre. At the very moment when Sartre became, in his own words, a 'convert,' philo-communism had been called into question: the need of a clear assessment of 'real socialism' was all the more urgent in light of the trial of Rudolf Slánský, who was executed in December 1952 in Prague.

9 In the meantime, the USSR was changing. Stalin died on March 5, 1953. On March 27, Khrushchev became the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and over a million gulag prisoners were amnestied by decree. Pospelov was put in charge of writing a report that served as a basis for the famous K Report circulated from April 1956 onward. It marked the beginning of a new era, symbolized by Ilya Ehrenburg's 1954 short story *The Thaw*.[13] The battered international perception of the USSR needed repair; to that end, a hub of intellectuals needed to be reconstituted on the model of the AEAR (Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires),[14] brilliantly orchestrated by Willi Münzenberg in the 1930s. Jean-Paul Sartre – who, despite never having visited the country, had just submitted a text to Robert Delpire for Henri Cartier-Bresson's book on China[15] – was called upon. He accepted the invitation, wanting to confirm the positions he had defended against his rivals (Aron, Merleau-Ponty, Camus) and take over the role played by Gide before the war by producing an anti-*Return from the USSR*.

10 Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were put up at the National Hotel near the Kremlin.[16] De Beauvoir later wrote in *Force of Circumstance* that the stay was punctuated with feasts, and that after a banquet held at the dacha of writer Konstantin Simonov, Sartre had, briefly, to be hospitalized![17] Her impressions? 'Work, leisure, reading, travel, friendships: all these things had a different meaning there.'[18] One could hardly disagree. A few days after Sartre's return, a triumphal interview appeared in *Libération*, a newspaper headed by Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie, who was close to the Communist party.[19] Sartre was delighted: 'There is complete freedom to criticize in the USSR,' he declared, a sentence chosen by the paper as its headline. His views were recorded with devotion by journalist Jean Bedel, and published in six installments from July 14 to July 20, 1954.

11 In 1975 Sartre confessed: 'After my first visit to the USSR in 1954, I lied. Well, "lied" is perhaps too strong a word: I had an article ... in which I said nice things about the USSR that I did not believe. I did it in part because, from my point of view, you just can't pour shit all over people whose guest you have been as soon as you get home; another reason is that I did not really know where I stood with respect to the USSR and my own ideas.'[20]

12 As it happened, on July 8, 1954, Henri Cartier-Bresson boarded the train for Moscow, where he arrived on July 14, the day when Sartre's articles first started appearing. Their trips were almost simultaneous: this could hardly have been purely coincidental.

H.C.-B./USSR

13 There is no question that Henri Cartier-Bresson did, effectively, belong to the world of intellectuals, with all its inherent conflicts. When he lived in New York, he had the reputation of being a 'radical.'[21] In 1946 he took a portrait of Sartre on the Pont des Arts. While their personal relationship was quite distant, their paths crossed several times. Sartre had been invited to New York in 1945 by the U.S. Office of War Information (OWI)

to write articles for the French public, which would present a more positive view of Americans than that which prevailed in France at the time. The OWI had funded *Le Retour*, Cartier-Bresson's film on prisoners of war.[22] In 1947, Cartier-Bresson traveled across the United States for *Harper's Bazaar* just as Simone de Beauvoir's remarkable *L'Amérique au jour le jour* [America Day by Day] was published.[23] Much later, Cartier-Bresson also echoed a Sartrean position when he stated that photography was 'a little weapon to change the world,'[24] an idea reminiscent of the first issue of *Les Temps modernes*. He was, no doubt, well aware of the debates then shaking the intellectual community: if America remained an enigma, the USSR was an open wound. His journey across the United States had both taken inspiration and deviated from James Agee and Walker Evans's book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*.[25] By contrast, as he was visiting the USSR, Henri Cartier-Bresson could not but situate his own approach within the polarized atmosphere of the Cold War. It is worth mentioning that Robert Capa and John Steinbeck had traveled to the USSR in 1947 for the *Ladies' Home Journal*. The result was a book, *A Russian Journal*,[26] conceived such that the arguments would be validated by the images. The cover bore only the writer's name; the flyleaf mentioned 'with pictures by Robert Capa,' an indication of the unequal status of the two men. Capa was granted a chapter of his own, however, 'A Legitimate Complaint,'[27] in which he deplored the restrictions imposed upon him whenever he photographed in sensitive locations. Steinbeck, though far from being in any way anti-communist, still pointed out that he and Capa had been knocked out by the vodka, champagne, and feasts of exotic dishes: 'We had just about begun to believe that Russia's secret weapon, toward guests at least, is food.'[28]

14 Cartier-Bresson, who had nothing of the innocent about him, always remained evasive about the circumstances of his trip. In his preface to *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson*, he evokes the long months he and his wife had to wait before receiving a visa, then the pleasant surprise when they received it. 'When can we leave? As soon as you wish.'[29] The photographer emphasizes the ease and the naturalness of the situation.[30] He later conceded that having a Russian filmmaker, whom he had met in Cannes, forward a copy of *Images à la sauvette*[31] to the embassy may have helped secure the valuable document.[32] Certainly the book was remarkable and Sergei Yutkevich, whose film *Skanderberg* had just received a prize at the festival, had extensive experience of the arcana of Russian power. But the explanation falls short. Cartier-Bresson had to know that the departments in charge of visas and propaganda worked hand in hand. In keeping with the spirit of Soviet bureaucracy, his book would provide a visual complement to Sartre's written account. After all, if the master dialectician could be fooled, a mere photographer would prove even easier to manipulate! Henri Cartier-Bresson downplayed the fact that he knew he was being used. He was the photojournalist *par excellence* at the time and knew he would incur as much criticism for declining the invitation to the USSR as he would for going. He decided to take on the task and meet the demand for information about this country that embodied a philosophical ideal and was the object of the most contradictory rumors, of the most unequivocal views.

15 Cartier-Bresson was also aware that he had little room to maneuver. In the preface, he makes an unexpected allusion to Prague, where his train stops, stating that he has not been there for thirty years – an oblique reference to the Slánský trial?[33] He knew that French society was divided about the USSR, as it had been about the Dreyfus affair. 'Back in Paris I was greatly interested by the questions we were asked ... Some people begin to ask: "How are things there, really?" and then, without giving me a chance to reply, go on

to develop their own views. Others utter an "Oh, you just came back from there!" and shut themselves up in an embarrassed and wary silence – as people do at family gatherings when a particularly divisive subject comes up.'[34]

16 He himself was not without reservations toward communists. He remembered their cynical Machiavellianism during the Spanish Civil War. Neither had he forgotten that his friend Paul Nizan, who had denounced the 1939 German-Soviet Pact, had his name dragged through the mud posthumously by Aragon: Cartier-Bresson was never to forgive Aragon.[35] The mistrust was reciprocal. The photographer had collaborated with newspapers associated with the communist party before the war and had been a fleeting member of the Parti Communiste Français, attending a few cell meetings before sneaking out. Yet he was far from being socially 'pure,' as his family could claim no proletarian origins, and he was not a born activist.

17 The exercise could still be achieved, given a knowledge of the tacit rules. The imposed itinerary was the same as for every other visitor since the 1930s: Moscow, Kiev, a few cities in the Asian republics, the shores of the Black Sea. An 'interpreter' accompanied him everywhere. Some subjects were imperative: arts, sports, the successes of agriculture and industry, new architecture and the subway, leisure. No photographs could be taken of 'strategic sites,' a very loose concept: railway stations, gas stations, factories (except model factories such as those producing Zis cars), communications installations, ministries, and so forth. In the Soviet imagination of the period, a photographer was somewhat akin to a spy ... A writer could conceal his intentions and write what he wanted upon his return, but not a photographer. Such had been Capa's traumatic experience: he could not wield his camera without policemen approaching him and had to wait until his plane was due to leave before his negatives were returned to him after a frame-by-frame inspection.[36] Henri Cartier-Bresson knew he would be able to bring back only images sanctioned by the authorities of the USSR after showing them the developed photographs. Accordingly, he brought his own photographic products in his suitcases.

An Auctorial Strategy

18 The photographer, as a figure, not having the prestigious aura of the writer, was less pampered. In Cartier-Bresson's account, there are no tales of the libations that studded all other journeys to the Soviet Union. Unlike Capa and Steinbeck, Cartier-Bresson had come with his wife Ratna, who was not a writer. He had to create a script for his photographs that, even more than texts, could be subject to distortions and misinterpretations, or simply stripped of any capacity to explain when explanations might be desired. He also had to develop a twofold strategy, one both generic and axiological.

19 The generic perspective comprised two aspects: borrowing from genres and the auctorial figure. Cartier-Bresson had to define his position as both an author of images and of texts, whose combination constituted a whole, linking aesthetic and informative functions along the rules of two related genres: journalistic reportage and travel in the land of the Soviets.

20 The fundamental generic elements as determined by François Hourmant[37] should be enumerated here, as they characterize the constants in reportage and are all evidenced in Cartier-Bresson's Russian work: the semantics of assessment, the search for realism, the

notion of the moral fortitude of the witness, the rhetoric of refutation with regard to unspoken prejudices, the phraseology of spontaneity, the theme of freedom and ease in getting about, the individual status of the traveler, midway between the guest and the tourist (Cartier-Bresson was, after all, traveling with his wife).

21 The figure of the author[38] aimed to bring together the artist, the photographer, the witness, and the journalist under the convenient umbrella term 'reporter.' The balance depended on the method of dissemination and the intended audience: the publication in a magazine and in the form of a book, being subject to different standards and different stakes, were not necessarily at odds with each other and could even be complementary.

22 *Paris Match* focused on Cartier-Bresson as a remarkable witness, but consequently, played down his status as an artist, despite a reference to 'one of the greatest photographers of our time.'[39] Delpire's publication of the book added to the auctorial foundation. Impersonal in *Paris Match*, Cartier-Bresson put himself center stage in the book, with the quality of the layout, certainly, but also as a photographer and, more subtly, as a thinker – or at least as a guiding spirit. Almost as a *writer*. The captions in the book speak with his voice, while those in the two issues of *Paris Match* suggest a vague entity incorporating both the reporter's and the magazine's editorial styles. As such, exchange of identities between the figure of the photographer and that of the writer evoked earlier is made manifest.

23 The two pages of introduction in issue 305 of *Paris Match* are telling: 'For the first time these people, heavily shrouded in secrecy for the past 37 years, unknown to us but through visual propaganda, are revealed as they are in their daily lives. Cartier-Bresson does not claim to have an answer to the essential questions of our time ... Defined by poet Henri Michaux in one sentence, "He is an eye," the photographer positions himself outside political debates and aspires to simply show us men and women.'[40] Cartier-Bresson is 'the reporter' par excellence, his point of view made as absolute as that of an 'author,' a writer. 'One of them,' Henri Michaux, solemnly pronounces. While the photographer does not seek to 'provide answers to essential questions' (by contrast to philosophers), at least he is not spinning tall tales. 'He is an eye.' However, all the writers who had previously taken the trip to the USSR – from Henri Barbusse to Édouard Herriot to Roland Dorgelès and Romain Rolland – had also claimed to be 'eyes,' but without showing any capacity for it. 'The communist experience,' Hourmant writes, 'was deciphered and validated by the appraising eye of the witness-traveller. This omnipresence of vision revealed the importance of this privileged investigative technique. Narratives played with that theme and offered the seminal "I have seen" in a variety of forms.'[41] To say that Cartier-Bresson was 'an eye' was not to diminish his work, but rather to acknowledge that he had taken up the torch from the best minds; but he had gone beyond them and the result was 'more real' since he had a mechanical, infallible eye that served as an extension of his own.

24 The formula for an irrefutable discourse lay at the intersection of the objective eye that caught 'people unawares on the street'[42] and the 'people, heavily shrouded in secrecy for the past 37 years, ... revealed as they were in their daily lives.' The ultimate achievement in photojournalism would then be the image that reveals everything while representing a complete non-event. This may be the case for 'Two young Moscow women waiting for their tram.'[43] Indeed, in Moscow young men enjoy looking at young women, who pretend they have not noticed them ... Communism could assume what the Czechs would come to call 'a human face.' Russians were ordinary men and women, despite the system within

which they lived: this was the discourse readers – and many intellectuals – wanted to find in *Paris Match* or in the magazines reprinting the reportage with this image on the cover.[44]

25 In his foreword to the book, Cartier-Bresson took inspiration from the anonymous liminal text published in *Paris Match*, which sanctioned him as the ultimate 'eye,' the equal of great writers. Refraining from quoting Michaux, he writes, 'But to those who ask me "What did you see?" I reply: "Let my eye speak for me." These pictures are meant for them.'[45] The typical clever side-step thus refers the readers back to the book itself – at once an artist's book and a writer's book.

26 In issue 305, *Paris Match* offered its readers an even more iconic representation, which was to appear in *Henri Cartier-Bresson photographe*, a non-thematic book and an essential step in the development of a definitive body of his artistic work, published by Delpire in 1979 with a preface by Yves Bonnefoy (another recognition by a major poet). The *Paris Match* caption read as follows: 'Visiting the Ukraine Hotel under construction, Henri Cartier-Bresson came upon male and female workers dancing to the music of an accordion. The scene took place at the construction site during a break spent at the workers' social club.'[46] The text subtly combines a testimony (its literary component) and an artist's aesthetic reflected in the expression 'came upon': the essence of his practice as a photographer (as in *Images à la sauvette*) is reinvested in his chosen role as witness. Cartier-Bresson writes: 'In that manner, I was able to photograph a great many people living and behaving just the way they would have if I had not been there.'[47] Without going back on his ethics and his aesthetics, he situated himself as a photographer-author in the thin line between what he was permitted to see and what he caught of reality, beyond prejudices and censorship.

The Axiological Perspective

27 The axiological perspective is closely related to the question of genres. As François Hourmant stresses, 'The "I have seen" of the traveller fully operates in the production of belief ... The witness becomes a judge and inevitably adds a positive or negative sanction to his narrative.'[48] The objectivity gained through the absolute power given to the eye did not amount to neutrality. On the contrary, the legitimacy of the authorial point of view had to allow for the viewer to form an opinion, and pass judgment on 'things seen' (to borrow Victor Hugo's title). Communism involved a strong religious dimension, in the sense that, as with St Thomas, touching was believing. Readers' letters three weeks after the publication of the two issues of *Paris Match* demonstrated just that: 'This reportage is a disaster,' one writer cried, while another hailed it as 'one of the most sensational productions of your remarkable weekly,' and a third thanked the magazine for finally publishing something factual about the USSR.[49] The heterogeneity of the reactions may have been food for thought. In fine tuning the hermeneutics of the book, Cartier-Bresson – conscious of the pervasive black-and-white vision of the subject – conceded while asserting, testified while leaving the door open for doubts to creep in.

28 Photographing queues in front of stores or a display of fruits and vegetables,[50] he could scarcely deny that supply was a problem. Still, underlining the fact would have been perceived as anti-communist, so he used a trick. He could probably have taken a few shots behind his hosts' backs, but they would most likely have proven unusable and would have undermined his credibility.[51] So why not turn the situation around and give the 'interpreter' watching him a role, and so use him to the photographer's advantage? This

pragmatic solution allowed Cartier-Bresson to make his discourse all the more complex, extending the site of discursive production to another protagonist. The interpreter appeared only briefly on page 46 of issue 305 of *Paris Match*, used by the photographer to reassure people worrying about a photographer training his camera on them: 'our comrade interpreter is by my side!' In the book published by Delpire, the role of the interpreter gains in importance and he appears from the beginning, in the foreword: 'We were given an interpreter. Every morning, he came to fetch us at our hotel and took us to where we wanted to go. Whenever we needed authorizations, he took care of the matter for us. He was very efficient and helpful.' The text then repeats the caption from the magazine, but in Russian as well, 'Tovarich perevodchik suda,' 'the comrade interpreter is there.' A few captions to the photographs – related to the supply of goods, specifically – make mention of the interpreter's comments: he becomes an active protagonist in the reportage. Stating what should be believed, he is thus the person whose intervention suggests that what is said is not necessarily what should be understood.

29 Henri Cartier-Bresson took extreme care in the production of this almost theatrical effect. Typed notes preserved at the Fondation Cartier-Bresson show this, as do the differences between them and the text eventually published by Delpire. Of the queues in front of stores, the notes read: 'People are patient and content to stand in line, it is still part of everyday life. "If only you had seen what it was a few years ago," our interpreter said, and "what we don't have yet, we will get sooner or later."' In the published version this becomes, 'In front of bookshops, butchers, groceries and other stores, crowds often assemble, waiting for opening time. "This is nothing," the interpreter told us. "You should have seen it a few years ago. Today what we lack isn't so much merchandise as stores. And what we don't have yet we'll have some day."'[52]

30 Here is another example from the same chapter 'Stores,' first in its unpublished version: 'Making purchases in Moscow or at home is the same; but it is not so much a question of creating needs as meeting the basic requirements of the population as a whole; one can find the essentials, but luxury items are very scarce; in fact, what people do not know, they cannot miss. Our interpreter told us that people had money but production could not yet keep up with their buying power.' In the book, the caption reads: 'The stores aim chiefly to fill essential needs; luxury goods are scarce. However, an effort is being made at present to educate the public in matters of fashion. "On the whole, we have money," our interpreter told us, "and the successive drops in prices make life easier. But production doesn't always succeed in keeping up with the new buying power."'[53]

31 Cartier-Bresson also felt the need to have another protagonist intervene: Ratna Mohini, his wife. They visited the puppet theater, and in the typed version the caption ends with: 'As everywhere else, we were struck by the simplicity of relations between people.' In the book, the informal note refers to a photograph of women enjoying ice cream at the Moscow Circus and becomes 'Intermission at the circus. Some women from the audience eating ice-cream cones. If I am not mistaken, they were much interested in my wife's dress.'[54]

32 The discreet mediation of Ratna Mohini normalizes the situation, even as the interpreter himself is not presented as an unusual figure. 'My photographic methods are not very common in Russia. Besides, neither my wife nor I speak Russian,'[55] Cartier-Bresson explains. The character of the interpreter was an essential part of the 'trip to the Soviet Union' genre, beginning with Steinbeck and Capa. In their narrative Steinbeck accepted Mr. Chmarsky and his obsessions (the 'Gremlin'), whereas Capa protested against the

arbitrary constraints that he imposed, and against his lessons in Marxism, eventually, in anger, calling him 'Chmarxist'.[56]

33 A question remains: what did Cartier-Bresson himself think? The point of view given by the interpreter, while allowing for some critical distance, often seems shared. The difference in tone is evident between the captions of the reportage published in *Paris Match* and those of the book. Those in the magazine send a single, strong message: Russians are regular folks, they practice religion, go on holiday, like to dance, practice sports, love peace. The book, however, involves a genuine reflection on doctrines and the means of their implementation, which it seems to corroborate and defend. Many of these images today seem nothing more or less than examples of socialist realism (the athletes parading in front of Malenov),[57] an aesthetic of which Cartier-Bresson was not a disciple. As with many other intellectuals, he needed time to break with the myths of his generation; a turning point was perhaps in 1956, when the first fault-lines appeared with the image of the tanks 'liberating' Budapest, or 1968, in Prague this time.[58] He had, however, sensed an evolution in attitudes: the photograph he then took of Ilya Ehrenburg (*fig. 3*), who had escaped the purges and prefigured dissidents, was published neither in *Paris Match* nor in *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson*, but in his 1985 *Photoportraits*.[59]

34 In 1955, while his photographs were exhibited at the Musée des arts décoratifs, the title of an article asked this question: 'Is Cartier-Bresson the Balzac of Photography?'[60] Despite the nuance offered brought by the question mark, the sentence reveals a transformation: the new figure of the intellectual shaped ten years earlier by Sartre, along with the tradition of the trip to the Soviet Union, made the polyvalence possible. After writers had been given the task of going to the USSR and taking note of facts and 'situations,' a photographer could in turn extend his role to include reflection, judgment, and commentary and publish his views – in newspapers, but also in the form of books – on the state of the world, the life of peoples, the comparative value of systems. If any proof were needed, the covers of the two books published in succession by Delpire speak for themselves: the names Henri Cartier Bresson and Jean Paul Sartre appear under the title in the original French edition of *From One China to the Other* (neither one is hyphenated). With *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson*, 'seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson' appears underneath 'Moscow': the photographer, or *that* photographer at least, could dispense with the support of the writer altogether. And the 'seen,' which comes before his last name, is not depreciative: rather, it sanctions a vision, a 'thing seen' by thought, as glorified by Victor Hugo many years before.

NOTES

1. Issue 305 is dated January 29–February 5, 1955. It includes an unsigned introductory text over two pages with the portrait of the photographer, and thirty images – two of which occupy full double page spreads. This first installment is devoted to the 'Russian people' and life in Moscow. Issue 306 (February 5–12) repeats the title 'The Russian People.' It features twenty-eight images

and is devoted to Leningrad, the Baltic, the Caucasus, the Asian republics, and the 'Russian Riviera' on the Black Sea. *Moscou vu par Henri Cartier-Bresson* was published by Delpire a few months later. It opens with an untitled text by the photographer and all 162 images are captioned and commented on by him. To preserve the consistency of this body of work, we have not included *À propos de l'URSS*, published by Éditions du Chêne in 1973. The English-language citations are from Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955).

2. *Les Temps modernes* 1, October 1945 [Paris]. Reprinted in Jean-Paul SARTRE, *What Is Literature?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 252. Sartre's criticism of Flaubert for being out of step with his times.

3. The term 'judgment' should be understood in both its philosophical and legal senses here, since Sartre was to found the Russell Tribunal in 1966 with the British mathematician, Bertrand Russell.

4. See Janpol SCHULZ, *Sexé au pays des Soviets*, with a preface by Philippe GODDIN (Laval: Éditions du Vieux Château, 1996) 111–54. Sexé was accompanied by a mechanic, René Milhoux, and they were not altogether irrelevant as Hergé conceived *Tintin au pays des Soviets*, published in *Le Petit Vingtième* in 1929, shortly before issue 192 of magazine *Vu* titled 'Au pays des Soviets' appeared (November 18, 1931).

5. Fred KUPFERMAN, *Au pays des Soviets. Le voyage français en Union soviétique, 1917–1939* (Paris: Gallimard/Julliard, collection 'Archives,' 1979).

6. André GIDE, *Return from the USSR* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), 42. The book was published in England as *Back from the U.S.S.R.* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1937); and *Afterthoughts: A Sequel to* Back from the U.S.S.R. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1937).

7. See Michel WINOCK, *Le Siècle des intellectuels* (Paris: Le Seuil, collection Points, 1999) 356–67.

8. This is the title of François HOURMANT's book, *Au pays de l'avenir radieux, voyages des intellectuels français en URSS, à Cuba et en Chine populaire* [In the Country with a Bright Future. When French Intellectuals Traveled to the USSR, Cuba, and the people's Popular Republic of China] (Paris: Aubier, 2000). See chapters 1 and 3.

9. See Raymond ARON, *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1957); and Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, *Humanism and Terror. The Communist Problem* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969)

10. David ROUSSET, *Les Jours de notre mort* (Paris: Minuit, 1947). The novel was reprinted by Hachette in 1992 with a preface by Maurice NADEAU.

11. See Tzvetan TODOROV, *Mémoire du bien, tentation du mal* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2000), 163–72.

12. Albert CAMUS, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage, 1984).

13. Ilya EHRENBURG, *The Thaw*, trans. Manya Harari (London: Cheswick, 1955).

14. See Michel WINOCK, *Le Siècle des intellectuels* (note 7), 280–83.

15. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *From One China to the Other*, preface by Jean-Paul SARTRE (New York: Universe Books, 1956).

16. Steinbeck had dined there with Ara-gon and Elsa Triolet seven years earlier.

17. Simone de BEAUVOIR, *Hard Times: Force of Circumstance*, vol. 2 (1952–62) (Cambridge Mass.: Da Capo, 1994), 26–30.

18. Simone de BEAUVOIR, *Hard Times* (note 17), 28.

19. Jean-Paul SARTRE, interviews with Jean Bedel, *Libération*, July 14–20, 1954. The cover page was reproduced for the exhibition of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF) devoted to Jean-Paul Sartre and may be viewed at http://expositions.bnf.fr/sartre/grand/191.htm.

20. Jean-Paul SARTRE, 'Autoportrait à soixante-dix ans' [Self-portrait at 70], *Situations X* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 220.

21. See Jean-Pierre MONTIER, 'HCB/USA,' in *Revoir Henri Cartier-Bresson*, eds. Anne CARTIER-BRESSON and Jean-Pierre MONTIER (Paris: Textuel, 2009), 332–47.

22. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *Le Retour*, Office of War Information/ministère des Prisonniers, co-directors Richard Banks and Jerrold Krimsky, 1945.

23. SARTRE's articles were published in 1945 in *Town and Country* and *Le Figaro*. They were reprinted in *Situations III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969). See Jean-Pierre MONTIER, 'HCB/USA' (note 21), 333–47.

24. Interview with Yves BOURDE, *Photo* 63, December 1972.

25. Walker EVANS and James AGEE, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941).

26. John STEINBECK, *A Russian Journal* (New York: Viking, 1948). The book was reprinted by Penguin in 1999.

27. Robert CAPA, 'A Legitimate Complaint,' in John STEINBECK, *A Russian Journal* (note 26), 146–49.

28. John STEINBECK, *A Russian Journal* (note 26), 185. See also his depiction of the Ukrainian *mamushka* treating them to a delicious meal, 106.

29. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 1), unpaginated foreword.

30. So did Marc CHADOURNE in *L'URSS sans passion* (Paris: Plon, 1932).

31. Literally, 'images on the fly,' published in English as *The Decisive Moment* by New York publisher Simon and Schuster in 1952.

32. See Pierre ASSOULINE, *Cartier-Bresson, A Biography* (London, New York: Thames and Hudson, 2005).

33. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 1), unpaginated foreword.

34. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 1), unpaginated foreword.

35. In May 1937, Cartier-Bresson was traveling with Nizan to cover the coronation of George VI in London. He maintained a friendship with Nizan's wife Henriette until her death. On the role played by Aragon after Nizan's 'betrayal,' see Michel WINOCK, *Le Siècle des intellectuels* (note 7), 417–20.

36. John STEINBECK, *A Russian Journal* (note 26), 46 and 220.

37. François HOURMANT, *Au pays de l'avenir radieux* (note 8), chapters 3 and 4.

38. On the notion, see Alain VIALA, *Naissance de l'écrivain: sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique* (Paris: Minuit, 1985); Pierre BÉNICHOU, *Le Sacre de l'écrivain, 1750–1830* (Paris: Corti, 1985). On the notion of the *auteur* in photography, see Gaëlle MOREL's thesis, *Le Photoreportage d'auteur: l'institution culturelle de la photographie en France depuis les années 1970* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2006).

39. *Paris Match* 305, January 29–February 5, 1955: 44.

40. *Paris Match* 305 (note 39): 44–45. Unsigned article.

41. François HOURMANT, *Au pays de l'avenir radieux* (note 8), 119.

42. *Paris Match* 305 (note 39): 46.

43. *Paris Match* 305 (note 39): 47.

44. The image appeared on the cover of *Life* and *Stern*. See Clément CHÉROUX, *Henri Cartier-Bresson* (New York: Abrams, 2008). Most titles repeat the idea of the 'Russian people' spelled out in *Paris Match*, whether in *Life* ('The People of Russia'), *Stern* ('Menschen in Moskau'), or *Epoca* with 'l'uomo sovietico.' For more complete references, see *De qui s'agit-il ? Henri Cartier-Bresson*, texts by Philippe ARBAIZAR, Jean CLAIR, Claude COOKMAN, Robert DELPIRE, Jean LEYMARIE, Jean-Noel JEANNENEY , Serge TOUBIANA (Paris: Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson/Gallimard/BnF, 2003) 407–8.

45. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 1), unpaginated foreword.

46. *Paris Match* 305 (note 39): 60. Surprisingly, the picture was not reprinted in *Moscou vu par Henri Cartier-Bresson* in 1955. It appears as no. 72 in the 1979 edition.

47. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 1), unpaginated foreword.
48. François HOURMANT, *Au pays de l'avenir radieux* (note 8), 187 and 192. The notion of 'operator of belief' I borrow from François HARTOG, *The Mirror of Herodotus. The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 264.
49. *Paris Match* 309, February 26, 1955: 7.
50. *Paris Match* 306, February 5–12, 1955: 46 and 55.
51. See no. 29 in *Moscou vu par Henri Cartier-Bresson*, reprinted in Clément CHÉROUX, *Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 44).
52. I would like to thank the Fondation Cartier-Bresson for providing me with the typed document. The caption is that for photograph no. 27 in Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier Bresson* (note 1).
53. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 1), photograph no. 30.
54. These two captions originated at the same time but were assigned to images 137 to 139 in the typed version and to no. 144 in Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow, Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 1).
55. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *The People of Moscow Seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson* (note 1), unpaginated foreword.
56. STEINBECK, *A Russian Journal* (note 26),138.
57. See for instance the parade of athletes before Malenkov, *Paris Match* 305 (note 39): 54–57.
58. In that respect, Edgar Morin's itinerary seems exemplary. He published *Autocritique* at the Éditions du Seuil in 1959, four years after Cartier-Bresson's reportage was published. One may wonder whether the photographer's point of view did not swing definitively with the Prague coup, a change epitomized by his patronage of Josef Koudelka. See Jean-Pierre MONTIER, *L'Épreuve totalitaire* (Paris: Delpire, 2005).
59. Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, *Photoportraits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), no. 273.
60. Unsigned article published in *Libération*, November 1, 1955 (Tuesday). Archives of the Fondation Cartier-Bresson.

ABSTRACTS

Two issues of *Paris Match* and the book *Moscou vu par Henri Cartier-Bresson* feature some of the photographer's most striking reportages, made during a visit to the Soviet Union. That the trip in question took place in 1954, a few weeks after Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir traveled to the USSR themselves, is not completely fortuitous. At the time, an apparent convergence of political history, the history of photojournalism, and the history of ideas resulted in a kind of cross-collaboration between the figures of the writer/public intellectual and the artist/photographer. Generic and axiological conditions coalesced around the literary genre of the travelogue in the Soviet Union and Sartre's idea of the responsibility of the writer confronting his times. From that standpoint, a reporter or photographer had to be more than a visual witness: a full participant in the debates on history and a full-fledged intellectual figure, without, at the same time, ever ceasing to be an artist. Was Cartier-Bresson a privileged protagonist in this convergence?

AUTHORS

JEAN-PIERRE MONTIER

Jean-Pierre Montier is a professor of literature at the Université européenne de Bretagne-Rennes 2. He is the author of *Henri Cartier-Bresson. L’art sans art* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), which was awarded the Prix Nadar. He co-organized the colloquium *Revoir Henri Cartier-Bresson* with Anne Cartier-Bresson (Paris: Éditions Textuel, 2009). He also co-chaired the colloquium *Littérature et Photographie* at Cerisy-la-Salle (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008). His other publications (on Hugo, Proust, Colette, Guillevic…) focus on the relations between literature and images.